

Berlin Pickpockets: Protecting Against Theft

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Europe - Germany

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The following has been taken from a guide published by the Berlin Police:

Perpetrator Techniques

Bumping Trick

Somebody bumps into you in a crowd, sandwiches you on an escalator, seeks body contact when you are boarding or leaving public transport, and robs you.

Pushing Trick

The thief pushes against you until you turn away, and your shoulder-bag or your backpack becomes handy.

Restaurant Trick

You enjoy your company and your meal in a restaurant, and the thief dips into your coat over the chair or your bag under the chair.

Exchange Trick

The thief asks you to change a coin and helps himself to bank notes from that pocket of your wallet.

Begging Trick

Children hold a card before you in a restaurant, or fool around you in the street, one of them uses this distraction to make a grab for your wallet on the table or in your bag.

Soiling Trick

"By accident" your clothes get soiled. The thief "helps" you to clean yourself and uses this chance for theft.

Supermarket Trick

Somebody asks you for a certain item. While you explain, your wallet is stolen from your bag on the shopping cart - at worst also your papers and house-keys.

Lifting Trick

In a restaurant, the perpetrator claims that he can estimate your weight. While he clutches and lifts you, his accomplice will steal your wallet.

Flower Trick

A stranger greets you nicely, embraces you and pins a flower on you while stealing your purse.

Carry-Bag Trick

Particularly senior people are offered help with their heavy shopping bags, afterwards the wallet will be gone.

Map Trick

Somebody shows you a city map and asks you for directions. While you explain you are getting robbed.

You should be particularly vigilant

In principle, pickpockets like to be with many other people. Here some of their favourite areas in Berlin:

- Kurfürstendamm / Tauentzienstrasse / Breitscheidplatz
- Alexanderplatz / Unter den Linden / Friedrichstrasse

- Karl-Marx-Strasse / Sonnenallee / Hermannplatz
- Hackescher Markt
- Parliament and government district
- Altstadt Spandau
- Schlossstraße (Steglitz)
- Inner city public transport
- All S-Bahn lines between Ostkreuz and Westkreuz
- Shopping malls
- Fun-fairs and Christmas markets

Take Care

Do not keep your valuables, papers (credit cards) and keys in outside pockets, hand-bags or back-packs. Inside pockets, pouches carried round the waist or neck, or front trouser pockets are hard to get at and thus safer. Keep your bag or backpack closed and carry it in front of you or under your arm. Try to do without your shoulder-bag when you visit busy areas. Never leave your bag or backpack out of your sight (in trolley, under the table, on a chair in a restaurant). Be vigilant and suspicious when you get pushed, soiled or distracted. When you take off your coat, do not leave any valuables or keys in its pockets. Do not count your money in public; be particularly attentive when you withdraw cash.

When you did get robbed

Report the theft to the police. The police can only take action when they know of the crime. Get your mobile telephone blocked immediately so that the perpetrator cannot make calls at your expense. Get stolen credit and bank cards blocked immediately.

In Germany, the central hotline for blocking credit cards and mobiles is: **116 116**

Report the loss of your personal documents to your embassy or consulate. Further information is available under:

<http://www.polizei-beratung.de>

<http://www.polizei.berlin.de>

You can contact the Pickpocket Investigators at
030 / 4664 - 375002 / - 375003 / - 375004

In case of emergency call 110

Berlin Police website:

<http://www.berlin.de/polizei/english.html>